



Student Veterans Bring Unique Perspective to College Campuses

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These young men and women arrive on campus with a very different perspective than your typical college student.

Dan Rosenthal's college career was interrupted for a 13-month tour of duty in Iraq with his Army infantry unit. He returned to Florida State University's campus a changed man.

"I still catch myself as I'm driving; I look around on the side for bombs on the side of the road. When I walk, I look on the roofs of buildings to see if there are snipers out there."

He found it hard to relate to other, more typical college students who hadn't just been through a war. So he helped found one of the country's first campus support groups for Iraq and Afghanistan war vets. The non-political group helps student vets deal with college stresses and navigate the complex veteran's benefit system.

Some 23,000 returning Florida veterans are using the GI Bill. About 19,000 are attending the state's colleges and universities.

Charles Figley is the faculty advisor for FSU's Collegiate Veterans Association. He says student vets tend to be very motivated.

"There's nothing like being close to death to focus the mind and help you figure out what you want to do in life. This is in contrast to most students, who discover that along the way."

Dan Rosenthal agrees.

"I know my grades are certainly miles, miles beyond where they were my freshman year when I hadn't been in the military."

And he says sometimes having other vets your age to talk to can make all the difference.

Florida State is one of only four public campuses in Florida with a formal support group for student vets.